

## REMARKS

Claims 1 and 2 have been rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious and unpatentable over Rabinovich '892. Claims 3 through 9 have been found to be of allowable scope.

Responsive to the rejection of claims 1 and 2, applicant has amended claim 1 to more precisely recite the nature of the present invention. As so amended, it is believed that all claims are allowable over the references of record.

In particular, Rabinovich '892 discloses a multi-point communication system in which the communication units 104A, 104B...are interconnected in a uni-directional or "daisy chain" configuration. That is, data is passed between the units in a single direction, the remote-most unit having a return link to LE 103. Thus, a break in the chain at any point completely disables the system.

The present invention, on the other hand, and as now specifically recited in claim 1, provides bi-directional point-to-point communication between each communication unit and its adjacent neighbor units by having a pair of framers each establishing bi-directional communication with the remote communication unit to which it is coupled. This feature is further recited in claim 1 by the recitation of control means coupled to the framers to control passage of data both ~~to~~ and ~~from~~ each of the framers in connection with the coupled remote units. Such a feature is neither taught nor suggested by Rabinovich '892. The present configuration provides a more robust communication environment and simplifies the interconnection of units in its intended environment, such as a railroad train system, in which it would be both impractical and expensive to provide a return loop from the distal-most unit or rail car back through all other cars to a parent unit, which would be required by the Rabinovich '892 technology.

The Examiner has also indicated that the term "protocol framer" as used in claim 1 is not explicitly defined in the specification, although the operation of the framers is described.

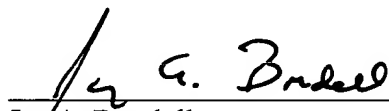
Applicant has redefined the framer as a "framer operating under an E1/T1 protocol" in an attempt to clarify the nature of the framer. In addition to being described in the specification, such framers are well known in the art. Applicant has also corrected a typographical error in claim 5.

Passage to allowance of all claims is solicited.

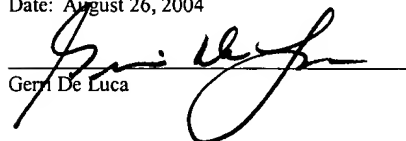
Respectfully submitted,

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Geri De Luca